

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Rob Wittman (VA-1) voted in favor of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 (NDAA) during its consideration in the House Armed Services Committee (HASC). H.R. 1960 passed the HASC with overwhelming bipartisan support.

“While this bill will not fix all of our nation’s readiness challenges, it goes far in addressing depleted force readiness levels and associated levels of assumed risk,” Wittman said. “With successive rounds of budget cuts and sequestration, readiness rates are at historic lows and our warfighters are at risk. I will continue to be vigilant to ensure the Congress does everything possible to provide for the men and women who risk their lives for our nation’s freedom.”

Wittman voted to protect the military pay raise, prevent TRICARE cost increases, and combat sexual assault in the military. He continued, “This bill keeps faith with those who have volunteered to serve our nation, protecting them not only from enemies intent on doing them harm, but from the unacceptable scourge of sexual assault from within the force.”

Wittman, Chairman of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness, also noted the following provisions in the bill reported out of Committee today:

Base Realignment and ClosureThe legislation includes language to prohibit the Department from proposing, planning or initiating another round BRAC, which was authored by Chairman Wittman in the Readiness portion of the legislation. Wittman successfully opposed an amendment that would weaken this language by allowing the Pentagon to plan for a round of BRAC. The amendment was defeated by a vote of 18-44.

Fort Monroe

Wittman also noted language included to direct the Army to transfer land within Fort Monroe to the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Naval Resources

Wittman stressed the importance of retaining naval assets to ensure prudent use of taxpayer dollars, preventing the Navy's proposal of early retirement for seven Ticonderoga Class Aegis Cruisers and two Amphibious Ships. The FY14 NDAA would prohibit the Department of the Navy from retiring these ships that have over 10 years of hull life available and provide sufficient funds to modernize these ships. The Navy has indicated they want a fleet of 306 ships, removing these ships from the battle force would reduce levels toward 270 ships in 2015. Our commitments around the globe require our Navy to be forward deployed. Furthermore, our ability to project power, protect commerce, and conduct maritime security operations must not be diminished. These ships are critical assets to executing the national security strategy.

Guantanamo Bay

The NDAA maintains the bi-partisan prohibition against transfer of detainees from Guantanamo Bay to the United States or to countries with confirmed cases of transferred detainees returning to the fight.

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He serves on the House Natural Resources Committee and the House Armed Services Committee where he is the Chairman of the Readiness Subcommittee.